

REMARKS

This is in response to the Office Action dated September 20, 2007. Claims 1 and 3-19 are pending.

Formalities including Section 112 issues

It is believed that the changes to claims 1 and 18 address and overcome the formality issues raised on pages 2-3 of the Office Action.

Art Rejections

Claim 1 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Stein et al. (U.S. Patent 5,071,491; hereinafter “Stein”), and also as being unpatentable over various combinations involving Yoda et al. (U.S. Patent 6,528,718), Meadows (U.S. Patent 3,455,080), and Hatsukaiwa et al. (U.S. Patent Application Publication 2003/0034064, hereinafter “Hatsukaiwa”).

Stein Rejection

Stein discloses an edge face sealing member (26) as shown in Fig. 7. In addition, although not actually an edge face sealing member, Stein interposes a member made of an insulating material between the solar cell module body (25) and the insulating (27). Based on the description in column 4, lines 5-7 of Stein, the Office Action appears to contend that the interposed insulating member may serve as an edge face sealing member.

However, claim 1 has been amended to require that the upper sealing region, the lower sealing region and the side sealing region are formed *integrally*. Stein fails to disclose or suggest this subject matter of claim 1 (claims 14 and 19 define over Stein in a similar manner). Furthermore, Stein also fails to disclose the feature of claim 1 that “wherein tip portions of the upper sealing region and the lower sealing region are formed in a bent fashion so as to be

inclined toward a groove recess, and wherein a distance between said tip portions is substantially the same as or is somewhat less than a thickness of the edge portion of the solar cell module body or bodies”.

For each of the above two reasons, the rejection based on Stein should be withdrawn. Citation to other art cannot cures the above flaws of Stein.

Meadows & Yoda Rejection

Claim 1 also stands rejected under Section 103(a) over Yoda in view of Meadows. This Section 103(a) rejection is respectfully traversed.

The window sash edge face sealing by Meadows, which is not fitted into a frame, is not applicable to the solar cell module body edge face sealing of the present invention. Moreover, even if the window sash edge face sealing by Meadows may be applied to the solar cell module body edge face sealing of the present invention, the resulting product cannot achieve the effects and operations as expected by the present invention. Meadows window sash is entirely unrelated to the invention invention.

The Office Action appears to indicate that the edge face sealing members of the cited references are simply intended for protection against weather elements (specifically, for outdoor installation). Thus, the Office Action appears to contend that the edge face sealing members of the cited references are applicable to the present invention. However, claim 1 requires that “the upper sealing region and the lower sealing region being disposed so as to open to the outside”. This requirement may ensure secure sealing of a gap between the edge face sealing member and the solar cell module body when the edge face sealing member seals a gap between the solar cell module body and the frame body. In contrast, the window sash edge face sealing by Meadows,

which is not intended to be captured into a frame body, cannot securely seal a gap between the edge face sealing member and the solar cell module body.

Furthermore, even if the window sash edge face sealing by Meadows is applied, the resulting structure cannot achieve the effects and operations as expected by certain example embodiments of the present invention.

Hatsukaiwa

Claim 1 as amended requires that “the upper sealing region, the lower sealing region and the side sealing region make a *tight contact* with the solar cell module body or bodies when the edge face sealing member having an integral structure is captured within at least one of the frame body or bodies.” Hatsukaiwa fails to disclose or suggest this. A careful analysis of Fig. 22 of Hatsukaiwa reveals that the edge face sealing member and the solar cell module body make a point contact *without making a tight contact* with each other. This is the opposite of what claim 1 requires. Citation to other art cannot cure the flaws of Hatsukaiwa in this respect. Claims 14 and 19 define over the cited art in a similar manner.

It is respectfully requested that all rejections be withdrawn.

YOSHIDA et al.
Appl. No. 10/688,994
December 14, 2007

Respectfully submitted,

NIXON & VANDERHYE P.C.

By: 

Joseph A. Rhoa
Reg. No. 37,515

JAR:caj
901 North Glebe Road, 11th Floor
Arlington, VA 22203-1808
Telephone: (703) 816-4000
Facsimile: (703) 816-4100